

Why GAO Did This Study

The performance of federal agencies is central to delivering meaningful results to the American public. GPRAMA, along with related guidance, assigned responsibilities for managing performance to key officials. It also provided a statutory basis for the existing PIC, a council made up of agency PIOs that is tasked with assisting OMB with topics related to GPRAMA. GPRAMA directed GAO to report on the act's implementation. This report, one of a series under that mandate, (1) examines the status of federal agencies' implementation of the performance management leadership roles under GPRAMA and (2) evaluates the role of the PIC in facilitating the exchange of best practices and improving agency program management and performance.

To address both objectives, GAO conducted a survey of PIOs at all 24 CFO Act federal agencies, as well as in-depth case studies of HHS and NSF, which were selected because they have differing characteristics such as size. GAO also interviewed and obtained documents from OMB staff and OPM officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Director of OPM work with the PIC to identify competency gaps for agency performance management staff and use this information to identify and share relevant agency training. GAO also recommends that the Director of OMB work with the PIC to gather regular feedback from members on its performance and update its strategic plan. OPM and OMB staff agreed with these recommendations.

View [GAO-13-356](#). For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov.

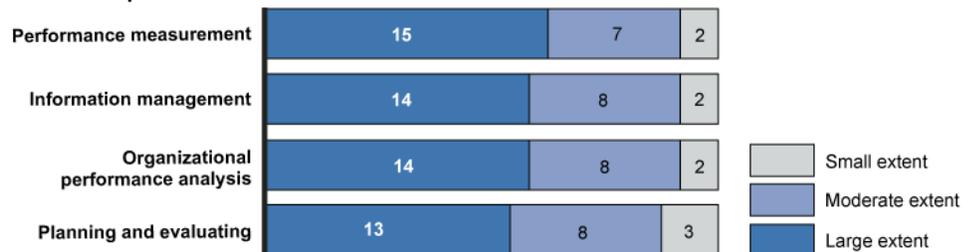
MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Agencies Have Elevated Performance Management Leadership Roles, but Additional Training Is Needed

What GAO Found

The designation of senior-level officials to key performance management roles with responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) has helped elevate accountability for performance management within federal agencies and ensure high-level involvement, according to officials GAO interviewed. The 24 Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act agencies have all assigned officials to the key management roles—chief operating officer, performance improvement officer (PIO), and goal leader—required under GPRAMA, according to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the results of GAO's PIO survey. PIOs GAO surveyed reported that most key officials were greatly involved in central aspects of performance management, such as agency quarterly performance reviews. PIOs GAO surveyed, and priority goal leaders GAO interviewed at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), reported they were supported in their responsibilities by their deputies and other staff. PIOs generally reported that their staff had competencies identified as relevant by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), such as reasoning, to a large extent, although PIOs reported that the competencies in the figure below were not as widespread among their staff as the other competencies.

PIOs' Assessments of the Extent to Which Their Performance Management Staff Possessed Selected Competencies



Source: GAO.

OPM has taken steps to work with agencies to incorporate performance management staff competencies into training. For example, OPM is working with the Performance Improvement Council (PIC) to develop a website that will include such training. However, at this time, it does not plan to assess competency gaps among agency performance management staff to inform its work. Without this information, it will be difficult for OPM, working with the PIC, to focus on the most-needed resources and facilitate their use by other agencies.

PIOs generally found that sharing of best practices and development of tips and tools are the most helpful aspects of the PIC, and reported strong agency attendance at meetings and participation in working groups. However, the PIC has not regularly collected member feedback about its performance. Additionally, although the PIC has a strategic plan in place, it has not updated it since GPRAMA was enacted. Routine member feedback and an updated strategic plan that reflects changes required by GPRAMA could help increase the PIC's effectiveness. Without these assessment tools, the PIC lacks an important basis and means for directing and evaluating its performance.